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**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR MARCIA BERNICAT  
HANDOVER CEREMONY FOR  
THE USDA MCGOVERN-DOLE PROGRAM  
KANCHIPARA 1 NO. GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL  
GAIBANDHA, BANGLADESH**

**June 10, 2015**

Mr Abu Bakar Siddique, Deputy Commissioner (in charge), Gaibandha District

Mr Md. Ashraful Islam, Superintendent of Police, Gaibandha District

Agricultural Minister-Counselor, Scott Sindelar

World Food Program Representative, Christa Rader

Distinguished Government of Bangladesh officials,

School administrators, teachers, and students,

Other invited guest

Dear friends,

Thank you so much for the warm welcome, and for taking the time to join me at the handover ceremony today. I am so pleased to be visiting Gaibandha for the first time.

I would like to give special thanks to the Kanchipara 1 No. Government Primary School for hosting the ceremony, and to the World Food Program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for helping to organize the program.

Over the past decade, the USDA McGovern-Dole program has partnered with the World Food Program (WFP) to provide a daily snack to approximately 350,000 school children in Bangladesh. The program has improved basic nutrition and given parents one more good reason to keep their children in primary school.

In 2014, the U.S. Government committed to donating 29,000 metric tons of soft white wheat over the next three years. The donated U.S. wheat from this project will be used to produce nutritious

biscuits. Under the school feeding program, each student will receive a 75 gram packet of micronutrient fortified high energy biscuits each day he or she attends school.

From 2015-2017, we estimate that an average of 130,000 children per year in approximately 1,000 schools in the Gaibandha District will receive these biscuits. The program is concentrated in four Upazilas: Gobindaganj, Saghata, Sunderganj, and Fulchari.

By providing a school snack to children who attend school, the USDA McGovern-Dole program helps improve school attendance, increase student attentiveness, and reduce hunger. This builds upon Bangladesh's successes over recent decades in improving the health of children and educational levels in society. We are pleased to build on the Government of Bangladesh's commendable efforts in this regard.

The USDA McGovern-Dole program also supports complementary activities that encourage teacher attendance and improve the quality of literacy instruction in classrooms.

Under this award, the WFP will collaborate with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to hand over all formal schools receiving school feeding assistance from USDA. By 2017, these schools will be transferred to the Government of Bangladesh's National School Feeding in Poverty Prone Areas program.

The WFP collaborates closely with the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the sustainability of school feeding through a national school-feeding model. Under the auspices of the USDA's McGovern-Dole program, the WFP will build capacity within government institutions to implement school feeding.

The donated U.S wheat that arrived in Bangladesh a few months ago supports the goals of the USDA McGovern-Dole program and the Government of Bangladesh to improve nutrition for the Bangladeshi people and their children. It is my pleasure to symbolically hand over this donated U.S. wheat from the American people, especially our farmers.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*

**GR/2015**